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Homeland Security Appropriations Ranking Member, Rep. David Price

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"Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the \$17 billion package to assist those communities devastated by Hurricane Sandy. We in North Carolina, remembering Hurricanes Fran and Floyd, know how important it is for Congress to extend itself in such a time of need.

"As Ranking Member of the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee, I note that DHS would receive \$5.527 billion within this base package, accounting for just 54 percent of the Administration's request for the Department. Also absent are \$6.1 billion in Disaster Relief and \$300 million in Disaster Loans.

"Without this additional \$6.1 billion, FEMA estimates that the DRF will run out of money in May 2013, halting long term rebuilding in places like Joplin and Tuscaloosa.

"Adopting only the \$17 billion proposal does not even fully fund current Sandy estimates, and astonishingly, provides no funding for further disasters in 2013.

"The \$17 billion package also short-changes the Coast Guard by about half the request and does not include funds requested for CBP, ICE, or the Secret Service.

"While my Republican colleagues say the \$33 billion package will address my concerns, requiring separate votes is designed to either doom the second bill or to pass it on the backs of Democrats while Tea Partiers vote "no."

"This is another example of the Republicans playing politics with disaster aid - - thumbing their

nose at the members of the Coast Guard decimated by Sandy and at the firefighters in Breezy Point trying to rebuild their devastated community.

"They are saying to their own constituents, if disaster strikes, there is no guarantee Congress will assist you. This is a dangerous precedent.

"Mr. Speaker, when I was Chairman of the Subcommittee from 2007-2010, we provided more than \$14 billion in emergency disaster relief spending following natural disasters. Not once during that process did I ask – who was affected, Democrats or Republicans? Red or Blue states? We provided the money, based on the President's request, without hesitation because that is what the American people expect and deserve from Congress in a time of need.

"So, Mr. Speaker, I will support both of these amendments and urge my colleagues to do likewise. The right thing to do, however, would have been to hold a vote on the bipartisan Senate package sent to us in December."

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